



Assessing the Accomplishment of the Three Child Outcomes

What Is Assessment?



“Early childhood assessment is a flexible, collaborative decision-making process in which teams of parents and professionals repeatedly revise their judgments and reach consensus....”

Bagnato and Neisworth (1991)

Quoted in DEC Recommended Practices (2005)

DEC Recommended Practices for Assessment



- Involve multiple sources
 - Examples: family members, professional team members, service providers, caregivers
- Involve multiple measures
 - Examples: observations, criterion- or curriculum-based instruments, interviews, norm-referenced scales, informed clinical opinion, work samples

Assessment Tools



- Assessment tools can inform us about children's functioning in each of the three outcome areas
- Challenge: There is no assessment tool that assesses the three outcomes directly

Assessment Tool Lenses



- Each assessment tool carries its own organizing framework, or lens
- Many are organized around domains
- Content in the domains isn't always the same, even if the names are the same
- Key question:
 - How much and what information will a given tool provide about the attainment of the three child outcomes?

Making Use of Assessment Tool Information



- The ECO Center has “crosswalked” assessment tools to the outcomes
- Information from formal or published assessment tools can be very useful, but it needs to be understood and used in the context of achievement of the three outcomes
- Teams may have additional information that paints a picture of the child that differs from one provided by an assessment. Teams may “override” the results from an assessment tool

Remember This



- Flexibility is required in applying assessment tool results to the outcomes
- Teams need to decide what information from an assessment tool is relevant for this child

Critical Assumptions Related to the Three Child Outcomes



- Measuring achievement of the outcomes is based on comparison with age expectations
- Children of different ages will demonstrate achievement in different ways, so expectations change with age
- There are many pathways to functioning for children with atypical development (e.g., using sign language, wheelchair).

Assessing Functional Outcomes



- What does the child usually do?
- Actual performance across settings and situations
- How the child uses his/her skills to accomplish tasks
- **Not** the child's capacity to function under unusual or ideal circumstances
- **Not** necessarily the child's performance in a structured testing situation ("noncompliant")

Additional Resources



- ECO center online: www.the-eco-center.org
 - [Instrument Crosswalks](#) web page
 - [Age-Expected Child Development](#) web page
- Email: staff@the-eco-center.org